

2004 Legislative Session Challenges KDHE

*By Susan Kang
KDHE Policy Director*

As the 2004 Kansas Legislature convenes its current session, the KDHE legislative team has rolled up their collective sleeves and jumped into the policy-making arena. The process of creating meaningful and effective legislation is a daunting task, whether it's to assist legislators, other agencies, the Governor's office, or our agency.

The role of the Policy Director is to assist all parties involved in the process to understand KDHE's position on pending, or existing legislation, while serving as the legislative representative for Secretary Bremby and KDHE. The Director's duties include working with the Legislative Team and Legislative Support Team to coordinate our tracking of bills that affect our agency.

Our team's duties may include:

- Reviewing bills for agency relevance and designating priority
- Discussing policy positions for the agency
- Determining whether testimony is to be presented
- Identifying testimony author, presenter, position, message and due dates
- Reviewing testimony and fiscal notes for accuracy and consistency
- Providing testimony

Within our organization, we know and appreciate the daily challenges of meeting the expectations of our Kansas constituents – whether it's the public or state government.

Many pieces of legislation created or amended this session will impact our jobs and mission at KDHE. Some potential legislative hotspots may involve food-services inspection; drop-in programs; and landfill permitting to identify a few. Other health and environment issues will rise as well during this term that require our legislative oversight and involvement.

We have created a great new tool to assist our legislative team with collaborating and tracking bills of interest to KDHE's mission and service. The KDHE Internal Legislative Tracking System is an Internet-based, secure web site that allows our team members to track bills, share testimony, fiscal notes and other materials necessary to successfully track and affect legislation introduced at the Capitol. The advantage of a web-based system is the team's ability to respond immediately to situations and requests from any location with an Internet connection.

As the session progresses, we'll keep our KDHE colleagues updated on pending legislation critical to our mission and service. Working together, we can help Kansans live, work and play in a safe and healthy state.